

# A sanctuary or death trap?

Illegal netting, plying of mechanised boats in Halda put broodfish in peril

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Ctg

Although Halda, the lone source of natural carp breeding in South Asia, is deemed as a sanctuary for broodfish, the river is now turning into a death trap for mother fish, thanks to rampant netting and plying of mechanised boats.

At least 35 broodfish were netted to death and another nine killed after being hit by mechanised boats in the river in the last two months -- that too ahead of spawning season, according to Halda River Research Laboratory.

At least five spots next to the river were identified, where around 50 people were seen netting the broodfish, said locals. The areas are Nangolmura, Forhadabad, Chipatholi, Gorduara and Madarsha.

Broodfish released sample eggs (before releasing eggs in full) on May 5, and are now waiting for heavy rainfall accompanied by gusty wind and thunderbolt, which creates a congenial atmosphere for breeding.

The above-mentioned incidents are taking place amid a ban on catching the fish, imposed by the Department of Fisheries around 10 years ago. Recently, the department imposed another ban on plying of mechanised boats in the river.

The ban area is 40km -- ranging from Nazirhat to Kalurghat -- and only two Ansar members have been assigned to oversee that, making it almost impossible for them to supervise such a huge area.

Halda crisscrosses through three upazilas of Chattogram, but only Hathazari upazila administration was found actively looking after the river while Fatikhari and Raosan administrations were showing apathy in this



A dead broodfish found by the river at Hathazari upazila's Uttar Madarsha area recently. Experts say lack of awareness and monitoring are causing the deaths.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

regard. In last three months, Hathazari administration destroyed at least 1.12 lakh metres of current net, seven dredgers and seven mechanised boats, and sentenced two persons to jail, said Ruhul Amin, upazila nirbahi officer of Hathazari.

He said among the five spots they identified, Gorduara and Uttar Madarsha were the riskiest points for broodfish. Most of the nets were seized from there and 90 percent of owners are from Raosan, he added.

Prof Manzoorul Kibria, an eminent researcher with extensive work on Halda under his portfolio, said some unscrupulous people also

pour poison in the river to catch the fish. "It's not just the broodfish that are being affected, the toxic water also damages the aquatic ecosystem there as well."

He said they learned about this during their recent field operation. Stern measures have to be taken against those involved, he added.

"The government must come forward to raise awareness among those living on the banks of Halda," he said.

Such campaigns should be initiated at school level as well to protect the fish, Prof Kibria added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## N'ganj BNP demands fair treatment of farmers, workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Narayanganj Metropolitan BNP formed a human chain demanding fair price for paddy and proper compensation for jute workers, in front of the Deputy Commissioner's Office at Chandmari in the district yesterday.

ATM Kamal, general secretary of Narayanganj Metropolitan BNP, said due to unfavourable government policies, farmers are deprived of fair price for their products. Instead of buying paddy from opportunistic middlemen, the protesters demanded that the government buy directly from farmers.

He said jute mill workers' legitimate demands for fair compensation have to be accepted. At the same time, they demanded release of Khaleida Zia.

Narayanganj Metropolitan BNP Vice President Advocate Zakir Hossain, General Secretary ATM Kamal, Organising Secretary Abdus Sabur Khan Sentu were present among others.

## NEWS IN brief

### Freedom fighter Molindra Kumar passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Molindra Kumar Bauri, a freedom fighter, died at his residence in Moulvibazar early yesterday at the age of 70.

He left behind his wife, three sons and a daughter to mourn his death.

He was given state honours before being cremated in Alinagar village of Kamalganj upazila.

### Shamim Reza dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Shamim Reza, a journalist and former joint secretary of Dinajpur Press Club, died of cardiac arrest on Wednesday. He was 56.

Family sources said he was rushed to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital where he was declared dead. Shamim was Dinajpur district correspondent of Bangla daily Janata. He left behind his wife, two daughters and a son to mourn his death. He was buried at Sheikh Faridpur graveyard in Dinajpur.

### Death anniversary of Abul Khayer

CITY DESK

The eighth death anniversary Abul Khayer Majumder, an Awami League leader and Liberation War organiser in Feni, will be observed today, says a press release.

On the occasion, an iftar mahfil, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held after the Asr prayers at his home in Uttar Saliya in Parshuram upazila of the district.

## Jubo League leader among 17 accused of assaulting 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A case was filed with Kashimpur Police Station in Gazipur on Wednesday night over indiscriminately beating two people, against Ashulia Thana Jubo League convener Kabir Hossen Shorker and 16 others. However, police have not arrested anyone yet.

Abid Shorker Limon, one of the three plaintiffs, filed the case against eight named and at least eight unnamed people; Kabir was made prime accused.

According to the case statement, Abid had an ongoing dispute with Kabir over some business establishments in Gazipur city area. On Wednesday around 2:35pm, Kabir along with 17-18 people, in two microbuses, attacked Abid and his brother's

driver Abul, severely injuring them with hockey sticks. The victims were overseeing a mosque construction at the time.

They also took a mobile phone, gold ornaments and a large amount of cash from the plaintiff, said the case statement.

Abid said, "I am worried for my life as they might attack again." He added that Abul's condition was critical and he was admitted to a hospital in Gazipur.

Akbor Ali Khan, officer-in-charge of Kashimpur Police Station, said they are investigating the matter.

When asked for a comment on the matter, Kabir said that it was merely a family dispute with his distant cousin Abid. He denied beating them up with hockey sticks and taking their possessions.

## Lighter vessel capsizes with 1,100 tonnes of stone

Staff Correspondent, Ctg

A lighter vessel carrying 1,100 tonnes of imported stone capsized near Karnaphuli 3rd Bridge yesterday morning.

All 13 crewmen managed to save themselves by jumping onto nearby boats and vessels, said police and witnesses.

The vessel, MV Sea Crown, was anchored at a private ghat near Old Ferryghat at Isanagar on the south bank of the river Karnaphuli. It sank around 9:30am after a crack developed in the hull, said OC Md Alamgir of Karnaphuli Police Station.

After loading stones from mother vessel MV Bravo Trader, at Chattogram Port, the vessel arrived at the ghat on Wednesday. It was waiting there to unload the material, which was supposed to start yesterday morning, said MA Rony, secretary of the office of Bangladesh Lighterage Workers Union.

As there was a nor'wester yesterday, the vessel moved and got stuck in the stone-made embankment of the river. The owner firm, Mamata Trading, tried to move it in the morning. During the attempt, a crack developed, said Rony, a witness.

## Iron in our mustard oil 'natural'

Claims Rupchanda

CITY DESK

Bangladesh Edible Oil Limited (BEOL), a major producer of vegetable oil in the country, has claimed that the iron content in their mustard oil brand Rupchanda, is natural.

In response to a letter from Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution dated April 28 that told the company that the iron content in Rupchanda mustard oil is 3 ppm (0.003 gm/kg), higher than the prescribed standard, BEOL held a press conference on Wednesday. It said, "Processed through the traditional 'ghani' method, Rupchanda mustard oil is packed in its purest form where no foreign chemical or ingredient is added. The iron present in the oil is entirely natural from the seeds and this cannot be removed while keeping the oil quality intact."

It also claimed that Rupchanda is the top edible oil brand of the country, and has been awarded international certifications like AIB (American Institute of Bakers) and FSSC 22000. Iron is in the list of heavy metals that are harmful for human

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## FALSE CASE OVER DOWRY Arrest warrant issued against complainant

JNU CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Runa, who filed a "false" case against a Barishal businessman claiming him as her husband and accusing him of torturing her for dowry.

Judge Tabassum Islam of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-4 of Dhaka passed the order, after the lawyer for accused Sazzadul Haque pleaded her to produce Runa and her lawyer before the court.

Neither Runa nor her lawyer was present at the tribunal during hearing yesterday.

The judge also directed the officer-in-charge of Keraniganj Police Station to produce Runa before it during the next hearing of the case on June 25.

Runa, 26, of Arshinagar in Dhaka's Keraniganj lodged the complaint with the tribunal on March 11 claiming that Sazzadul married her in 2015 and used to torture her for dowry.

The tribunal also issued an arrest warrant against Sazzadul.

Sazzadul came to know of it after Barishal Kotwali police arrested him on April 15, complying with the arrest warrant.

A Barishal court sent him to jail the next day where he had to languish for eight days.

Sazzadul claimed that he did not marry Runa and the marriage certificate submitted to the tribunal was false.

Following his claims, The Daily Star investigated the matter and came to know the marriage certificate was fake. Even Md Khairul Amin, who was mentioned in the case statement as the lawyer for Runa, claimed that he did not file the case and someone may have misused his seal and signature to file the case.

The tribunal yesterday also issued a show-cause to Khairul asking why he was not present at the tribunal, and asked court authorities to issue a notice to the address of the lawyer asking him to remain present at the tribunal in the next hearing on June 25.

The judge also granted permanent bail to Sazzadul, executive director of Barishal-based Zam-Zam Nursing Institute.

## Best haleem and jilapi of Dhaka recognised

The Food Talk holds first award ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"The Food Talk", a Facebook-based community of food connoisseurs and enthusiasts, hosted its first award ceremony on Wednesday to recognise the best of two iftar staples -- haleem and jilapi -- in Dhaka.

The event, held at 138 East in Gulshan, included an iftar get-together for members of the group and invited guests.

"We want to build a community of food enthusiasts in Bangladesh in order to improve the overall food scene. We have done several food talks such as one on pizza, one on tea and then we had one on steaks. In future, we want to continue holding talks on food and identify the best food items and places in Bangladesh," said Taskin Rahman, one of the admins of the group.

After iftar, six entries for haleem and five for jilapi were placed on the table for

a blind taste test by senior members of the group, restaurateurs and foodies, who scored the delicacies based on texture, colour, aroma and ingredients. The guests' choices and judges' scores were tallied to decide the winners.

Haleem from Decent Bakery on Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi beat out the likes of Tarka and Emmanuelle's to be named winner, owing to its characteristic shredded meat in every spoon and delicate mix of spices.

As for jilapi, Khazana from Gulshan was voted the winner, despite stiff competition from Tarka and Kury Accent. The jilapi, fried in ghee and garnished with saffron, is considered one of the most coveted "chikon" jilapi in the city.

The event was sponsored by food delivery service Shohoz Food.



Members of the group pose for a photo.

PHOTO: STAR

## Salman Habib elected CCCI director

CITY DESK

Salman Habib, deputy managing director of Regent Airways, has been elected director of Chattogram Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) for 2019-21, says a press release.

Salman was born in a family of businesspersons. His great grandfather Naju Meah was the president of Assam-Bengal Chamber during British period. He is the grandson of Habib Meah who founded the renowned Habib Group, and son of Yasin Ali, managing director of the group.

Salman graduated in business administration from Queen Mary University in UK, discharging his duty as director of Habib Group and managing director of Regent Textile Mills Ltd.

Reacting to the news, he said, "It is a great opportunity for me. I will try to do something for the young and upcoming enterprisers in Bangladesh. I will also expand trade and business in Chattogram as well as Bangladesh as the leader of CCCI."



## Two killed in Ctg road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two persons were killed in road accidents in Chattogram city yesterday.

In Bahaddarhat area, the helper of a bus driver was killed after falling from the moving bus around 12:30pm.

Mansur Alam, 35, from Chakaria in Cox's Bazar, was declared dead at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), said CMCH police.

In Katalganj area, a motorcyclist died as a pickup and the bike collided head-on around 2pm.

The deceased was identified as Azizul Hakim Suman, 25, from Raufabad in Bayezid area, said Panchlaish Police Station Sub-inspector Abdoul Motaleb.

A mob intercepted the truck and beat up its driver. Later, police rushed to the spot and took the driver to CMCH, said the SI.